

OVERCOMING THE CONSENT DEFENSE

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AEQUITAS: THE PROSECUTORS' RESOURCE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

SUPPORT

This project was supported by Grant No. 2009-TA-AX-K024 awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of OVW.

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VICTIMS

- Strengthen
- Support
- Corroborate
- Prepare
- Heal

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911 CALL

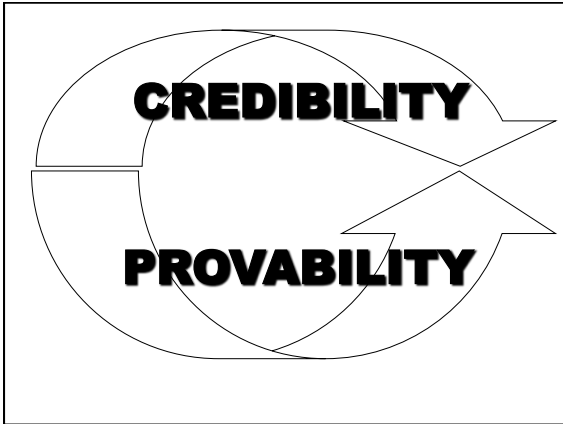
- This is a recording of a 911 call from a rape case
- Identifying information has been redacted

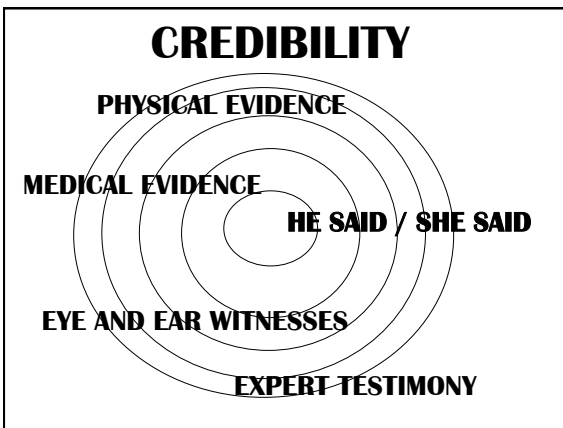
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QUESTIONS

- As a result of this call, what investigative steps should occur?
- At trial, would this recording be more helpful to the prosecution or defense?

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PREPARATION

You must devote extra time to these cases

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KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Obtain and document the truth
- Corroboration
- Jury selection
- Jury education

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MAIN PRINCIPLES

- Honesty is key!!!
- Explain all "bad facts" – there is power in the truth!!!
- Admit weaknesses but do not apologize for them

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INCONSISTENCIES

- Neurobiology of trauma may cause inconsistencies in statements
- Victim may be embarrassed about behavior
- Victim may fear getting in trouble for certain behavior
- Different statements for different purposes

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"PAINT" THE REALITY OF THE CRIME

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BUILD YOUR CASE; DON'T DEFEND IT

- Define the issues in your own way
- Use theme and arguments to rebut defense but remember it's all about the elements
- Do not let the defense define the jury questions
- Remember OJ!!!

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PREPARE THE VICTIM

- Instruct victim
 - To "TELL THE TRUTH"
 - Of the importance of accuracy
 - Not to volunteer information
- Address inconsistencies
- Prepare for cross
- It's okay to say, "I don't know."

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PROTECT THE VICTIM

- Address attempts to intimidate in and out of court
- Be sympathetic but professional at trial

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MYTH BUSTING

- Rape is a horrific crime
- Jurors are not horrified by cases that do not fit their idea of what constitutes rape

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OFFENDER FOCUSED

- It's not:
 - What did the victim do?
- It is:
 - What did the accused do?

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ACCUSED AS PREDATOR

•Focus on the defendant as:

- Predator
- Manipulator
- Planner
- Strategist

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ACCUSED AS PREDATOR

- Victim selection process
- Exit strategy
- Importance of defendant's fantasy
- Playing to the audience

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PROVE THAT SHE SAID NO!

- How did she say it?
- How did she show it?

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THE TRUTH ABOUT RAPE

- Most are non-strangers
- Rapists don't usually use deadly weapons cause physical injury
- Victims behave in many different
- False reports are a small minority of cases
- It is not the victim's fault

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GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING RAPE MYTHS

- Begin to educate the jury and dispel myths in voir dire and continue throughout the trial
- Tell the "whole story"
- Corroborate everything possible
- Argue the importance of the truth

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DEPERSONALIZE THE ACCUSED

- Refer to him as "the defendant" or "the accused"
 - Not Mr. _____, or Dr. _____
 - Not by his first name
- Refer to the victim by her name
- Expect the defense to do the reverse

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THE VICTIM

- Personalize the victim
 - Jury must understand who she is in order to understand her choices and behavior
 - Introduce the victim to the jury with sufficient foundation questions

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DEFINING RAPE

Almost 1/2 of the women who were characterized as victims of a completed rape by the National College Women Sexual Victimization Survey did not consider themselves to be victims of rape.

Fisher, Cullen, & Turner (2000)

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WEAPONS OF THE NONSTRANGER RAPEST

- Premeditation
- Planning
- Victim selection
- Manipulation
- Deceit
- Betrayal of trust

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UNDETECTED RAPISTS

- 120 of 1,882 men whose self-reported sexual acts met legal definitions of rape or attempted rape but went undetected by the criminal justice system
- 76 were recidivists, and reported committing additional rapes, either against multiple victims or the same victim, averaging 5.8 rapes per person.

Lisak & Miller, Repeat Rape and Multiple Offending Among Undetected Rapists, Violence and Victims, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2002

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UNDETECTED RAPISTS

- 70 admitted to other acts of interpersonal violence, including battery, sexual assault short of rape or attempted rape, child physical abuse, and child sexual abuse
- 97 admitted to committing rapes against women who were intoxicated because of alcohol or drugs
- 120 people admitted to 483 acts of rape or attempted rape

Lisak and Miller, 2002

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THE UNDETECTED RAPIST

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MEDICAL EXPERTS

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LACK OF INJURY

- Address this in voir dire
- Argument
- Call an expert

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LACK OF INJURY

67% of rape victims reported no physical injuries in addition to the rape. Only 6% sustained severe physical injuries.

"Injuries from Violent Crime", National Crime Victimization Survey, OJP (June 2001)

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LACK OF INJURY

Over 70% of rape victims reported no physical injuries in addition to the rape. Only 4% sustained serious physical injuries.

Rape in America: A Report to the Nation, National Victims Center & Crime Victims Research & Treatment Center (April 23, 1992)

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EXPERTS

- Do NOT stipulate to expert testimony
- If there is no injury, have an expert explain this
- Explain the SANE exam in as much detail as possible

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EXPERTS

- The absence of physical trauma is not inconsistent with rape.
- Expert medical testimony regarding the absence of physical injury is admissible in the prosecution's case in chief.

See e.g., Commonwealth v. Minerd, 562 Pa. 46, 753 A.2d 225 (2002)

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ADDRESSING VICTIM BEHAVIOR

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JURORS BELIEVE THAT A "REAL" RAPE VICTIM WILL

- Resist
- Complain promptly
- Be upset at trial

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THE VICTIM - BEFORE AND AFTER

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good choices/
good discretion• Bad choices/
bad discretion | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effects of rape• Life changes• Trial process |
|---|---|

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THE ACCUSED BECAME A STRANGER

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OLD LAW

- ◉ Required
 - Prompt complaint to authorities
 - Corroboration
- ◉ Some jurors might still expect these

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PROMPT COMPLAINT

- ◉ If there IS a prompt complaint:
 - Use it to corroborate victim
- ◉ If there is NOT a prompt complaint:
 - Address in voir dire
 - Ask victim to explain why not
 - Consider using an expert

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NO CORROBORATION

Utah had a corroboration requirement in its law until 1963

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NO CORROBORATION

The victim's testimony need not be corroborated to establish proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

U.S. v. Howard, 218 F.3d 556 (6th Cir. 2000)
Compare, U.S. v. Wiley, 492 F.2d 547 (10th Cir. 1973)

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EXPERT TESTIMONY

- Victim Behavior
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Neurobiology of trauma

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CREDIBILITY

- It's not "she said, he said" – It's "the State said, he said"
- So tell them why she's credible!
- Use stories to explain the difficult issues
- Go legal: focus on the elements

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DIRECT EXAMINATION IS KEY

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SEGMENTS OF THE DIRECT

- Introduction
- The Crime Reaction
- Double Direct
- Triple Direct
- Follow the Trauma
- Anticipate the Cross

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SENSORY AND PERIPHERAL DETAILS

- Proves credibility
- Enhances comprehension

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CORROBORATION

Visit the crime scene and document it with photographs, videotapes, and search warrants when possible

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NO MOTIVE TO LIE

Compare lack of motive to lie with agony of rape kit, testifying, police interviews, etc.

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PREVENT VICTIM BASHING

- ◉ Must insure that the focus of the case is the accused and his actions
 - Victim protection motions
 - Prepare with other bad acts
 - ◉ Show behavior that proves consciousness of guilt
 - ◉ Show changes in accused's behavior

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WITNESS ORDER

- ◉ Best witnesses first and last
 - Witness to victim's trauma
 - Medical witness if injury
 - Witness to defendant's confession

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CROSS EXAMINATION

- ◉ Prepare the victim
- ◉ Jury wants to hear the answers to the defense attorney's questions

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OPENING

- Tell the “story” of the case
- Deal with challenging facts head on
 - The victim told the truth about it even though it could hurt the case
- Keep focus on the offender

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CLOSING

- Tell the jury why you have proven the elements of each of the crimes
 - How does your evidence fit the elements?
 - Why is the defendant guilty?
- Closing comes first
- Discuss credibility
- Address reasonable doubt

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ANTICIPATE DEFENSE ARGUMENTS AND ADDRESS THEM

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DEFENSE CLOSING

- Should the victim be present?
- Victim support
 - Advocate
 - Family
 - Friend
- Motions in limine to prevent improper arguments

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DEFENSES

- Play into the myths about “good” girls vs. “bad” girls and that risky behavior invites the rape
- Character assassination

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